

Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition

5900 Abriana Way, Elkridge, Maryland 21075

From: Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition

To: Chairman Luke Clippinger

Re: Child Custody – Cases Involving Child Abuse or Domestic Violence – Training for Judges

Date: January 22, 2022

Dear Chairman Clippinger,

The Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. is in Favor of HB 561

We represent the Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition (Prevent Abuse and Neglect through Dental Awareness). We were established in 2000, our mission is “To create an atmosphere of understanding in dentistry and other professional communities which will result in the prevention of abuse and neglect through early identification and appropriate intervention for those who have been abused or neglected.” Dentists and Dental Hygienists (Dental Professionals) are mandated by the State of Maryland to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. Our coalition has established a Continuing Education (CE) course that educates Dental Professionals and others how to recognize, report, or refer. The Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners has deemed this course as a mandatory CE requirement for Dentists and Hygienists to renew their licenses. We also address domestic violence, elder abuse, human trafficking and bullying in our CE course.

Through experience our Coalition knows that sound decisions cannot be made without proper education, that is the main purpose of our continuing education course. It is imperative that Judges that hear custody cases of child abuse and domestic violence need to learn the consequences of their judgments. How their judgement will affect the victim. This is done by establishing a training program. Due to changes that occur over time it is important to update this information at least every 2 years and require that these Judges be made to update and stay current. We have seen in the Dental community that this is a plan that works resulting in more children being protected and afforded a better life.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 561 and ask for a favorable vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition

Carol Caiazzo, RDH President

Susan Camardese, RDH, MS, Vice President